

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT WA
SUBJ: REACTIONS TO MUDGE'S SPLIT FROM THE NP
REF: PRETORIA 5145

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER VORSTER MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT REGRETTING THE SPLIT IN THE NATIONAL PARTY IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA, BUT STOPPED SHORT OF CRITICIZING MUDGE FOR HIS ACTION. SEVERAL MORE PEOPLE HAVE JOINED THE MUDGE BAND-WAGON. PRESS REACTION TO MUDGE'S BREAKAWAY HAS BEEN LARGEFLY FAVORABLE. MUDGE, MEANWHILE, IS MOVING AHEAD WITH PLANS TO FORM A NEW PARTY. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, REACTING ON NATIONAL TELEVISION THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 28 TO DIRK MUDGE'S BREAKAWAY FROM THE NATIONAL PARTY, SAID THAT THE SPLIT

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WAS REGRETTABLE AND PLACED A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY NOT ONLY ON MUDGE AND DU PLESSIS, BUT ON ALL WHITE SOUTH WEST AFRICANS. VORSTER CONTINUED, HOWEVER, THAT "IT IS ENCOURAGING THAT BOTH GROUPS SUBSCRIBE TO THE AIMS OF THE TURNHALLE CONFERENCE AND THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF WHAT EXACTLY IS AT STAKE FOR THEM AS WELL AS ALL THE INHABITANTS OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA, AND THAT NEITHER

WILL DO ANYTHING WHICH WILL MAKE AN ALREADY DIFFICULT POSITION EVEN MORE DIFFICULT...IT IS THEREFORE TRUSTED THAT EVERYONE WILL ACT IN SUCH A MANNER THAT NO HARM WILL BE DONE TO THE CAUSE OF THE FUTURE OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA." VORSTER ALSO COMMENTED THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT MUDGE'S MOVE TO HAVE ANY "DECISIVE INFLUENCE" ON THE ONGOING NAMIBIA NEGOTIATIONS. SIGNIFICANTLY, VORSTER STOPPED SHORT OF CRITICIZING MUDGE FOR BREAKING FROM THE PARTY.

3. MOST OTHER REACTION TO MUDGE'S BREAKAWAY CONTINUED TO BE FAVORABLE. A SEVENTH MEMBER OF THE WHITE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY JOINED THE MUDGE GROUP, AND AN EIGHTH INDICATED THAT HE MIGHT ALSO JOIN. PERHAPS MORE SIGNIFICANT, IT WAS REVEALED THAT PAUL VAN DER MERWE, MEMBER AND DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT, HAD JOINED MUDGE IN WALKING OUT OF THE NP CONGRESS. REACTION IN THE SOUTH WEST AFRICAN ENGLISH AND GERMAN PRESS TO MUDGE'S MOVE WAS FAVORABLE, ALTHOUGH THE SWA AFRIKAANS NEWSPAPER INDICATED ITS CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR A. H. DU PLESSIS. IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS, THE OPPOSITION "RAND DAILY MAIL" EDITORIALIZED THAT MUDGE'S ACTION WAS PROOF THAT "IF YOU WANT TO REACH A PEACEFUL ACCOMMODATION WITH THE BLACKS IT CAN'T BE DONE THROUGH THE NP." THE "CITIZEN", WHICH USUALLY SUPPORTS THE NP, SAID THAT "MUDGE IS THE BEST MAN TO

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TAKE THE TERRITORY TO INDEPENDENCE. WE HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT HIS NEW PARTY WILL DO EXCEPTIONALLY WELL." EVEN THE NP MOUTHPIECE "DIE TRANSVALER", WHICH USUALLY DEALS VERY HARSHLY WITH NP CRITICS AND DEFECTORS, CALLED MUDGE'S FOUNDING OF A NEW WHITE PARTY "A NECESSARY STEP" TO ALLOW WHITES TO CHOOSE THE COURSE AND TEMPO OF THEIR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

4. MUDGE, MEANWHILE, REAFFIRMED HIS DECISION TO PUSH FORWARD WITH THE CREATION OF A NEW WHITE POLITICAL PARTY. HE REPEATED THAT HE WOULD ATTEMPT TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF GERMAN AND ENGLISH SPEAKERS FOR HIS PARTY, AND EVENTUALLY FORM AN ALLIANCE WITH THOSE BLACKS AND BROWNS WHO SUPPORTED THE TURNHALLE PRINCIPLES. ON THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF THE TERRITORY, MUDGE SAID "WE INTEND TO BUILD UP THE SAME SORT OF GOVERNMENT IN SWA WHICH THE SAG WANTS TO ADOPT BY CHANGING THE WESTMINISTER PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM TO POLITICALLY ACCOMMODATE OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF ONE COUNTRY."

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